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Learning to be interprofessional through the use of reflective portfolios?

Sezer Domac, Leicester City Council

Roger Smith, Durham University

Liz Anderson, University of Leicester

Abstract

Learning portfolios are used extensively in health and social care. There is evidence of their value as a tool to consolidate learning although limited information is available regarding their use in social work education. This study explores the use of a Portfolio to encourage social work students to reflect on their interprofessional learning. The portfolio offers a means of demonstrating professionalism concerning knowledge, skills and attitudes in the context of collaborative practice. The findings of this research suggest that qualifying students were largely capable of reflecting on their development of interprofessional competence after attending specific interprofessional learning events, which were part of a wider programme. Social work students found reflective writing difficult, although this improved over time. In particular students struggled to write about skills and attitudes. Students perceived the portfolio to be a good way to assess their progress and believed this helped them to engage with their learning and make meaning through reflection and analysis. They appreciated that interprofessional learning and feedback from their assessments had advanced their abilities for self-analysis; despite needing help with reflective writing, they felt better prepared for on-going use of reflection in their professional development, and in 'working together'.

Introduction

Interprofessional education (IPE) has a long history and over the last decade has become established as a necessary teaching method within health and social care curricula (WHO Report 2010). IPE aims to improve the quality of service user care through improving the capacity to build good working relationships between health and social care practitioners which in turn can enhance collective responses to service user's needs (Barr, 2002, p.8). IPE has evolved in parallel with policy responses to failures within health and social care delivery where poor team work played a central role (Department of Health - DoH, 2001a, 2003; Leathard, 2003; Laming, 2009; Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (Francis Report), 2010). In these reports, the shortcomings in interprofessional communication and the evidence of poor and dangerous practice have been highlighted. Much of this has been attributed to shortcomings in team working often led by social work and medicine, although other health and social care professionals are implicated (Irvine, 2003; DoH, 2006). Criticisms of this kind have proved to be particularly unsettling for social work, posing a threat to its own sense of professional integrity, let alone its capacity to engage meaningfully and authoritatively in inter-professional collaboration.

The need to unpack what it means to be interprofessional has also informed international research, which aims to map out the particular knowledge, skills and attitudes that undergraduate students should reach following learning and which can then be assessed (Reeves *et al.*, 2010). In North America the research has focussed on an outcomes based competency models, for example, the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative, Interprofessional Competency Framework defines learning outcomes under the following domain headings, i) role clarification, ii) team functioning, iii) interprofessional conflict, iv) collaborative leadership and v) service/family/community centred care (CIHC, 2010). Whereas in the UK, the Sheffield Capability Framework from the Combined Universities Interprofessional Learning Unit (CUILU) considered what students need to learn in order to become capable and effective collaborative practitioners (Walsh *et al.*, 2005). The core domains framework of capability are described as, i) ethical practice; ii) knowledge in

practice; iii) interprofessional working and iv) reflection. There is now a bank of competencies at the National Centre for Interprofessional Practice and Education stored at the University of Minnesota USA (<https://nexusipe.org/user>). However, some concerns have been expressed about the naïve adoption of competency-based approaches to learning and assessment (Phillips, 2011; Lurie, 2012). It is not enough simply to acquire and demonstrate the capacity to carry out a range of pre-determined functions, but 'competence' also depends on the ability to engage with, analyse and respond to the (unpredictable) lived experiences and feelings of people who use services.

Embedding IPE Although there has been considerable doubt about the core features and scope of interprofessional education, not least in the development and implementation of the curriculum on which this article is based (Anderson et al, 2015), there is certainly now an established consensus regarding its desirability and worth. We do not use the term uncritically, but interprofessional education is now firmly embedded within most health and social care curricula within the UK, although there is still more work to be done in this regard (Barr, Helme & D'Avray, 2014). Guidance on the inclusion of IPE in curriculum can now be found in professional body directives, for example, for training of doctors, (General Medical Council, 2009) nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (DoH, 2000; United Kingdom [UK] Central Council for Nursing and Midwifery, 1999; HCPC, 2012). The former General Social Care Council (GSCC), which had the responsibility for the approval of social care courses, stated that the new social work degree must support partnership and team working. The Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) picked up this duty from September 2012.

'Successful interprofessional learning can develop the student's ability to communicate and work with other professionals, potentially improving the environment for service users and professionals.'

(Health Care Professional Council - HCPC, 2012, p.40)

The HCPC is currently reflecting on the standards for interprofessionalism for the many and varied professions the council registers. The recently published government statement on knowledge and skills makes repeated mention of the

importance of effective understanding and collaboration between social work and other professional practitioners (Department for Education, 2014).

Assessing interprofessional competencies?

The College of Social Work has underlined the importance of inter-professional education in its curriculum guidance on the subject:

‘Effective inter-professional working is an essential component of good social work practice. To achieve effective outcomes in their work with service users and carers, social workers need to be confident in their communication with other professionals. In order to work with other professionals, work and promote collaborative practice, students will need support to develop interprofessional skills that build upon their core knowledge, communication skills, ethics and values. It is important to acknowledge that collaborative skills, knowledge and values are not inherent or automatically acquired – students need to be actively encouraged and supported to develop this aspect of their practice’. (Thomas & Baron, 2013 p.1)

However, there is little agreement on how students should be assessed regarding their professional approach to collaborative practice of their abilities to work in teams, although directives suggest pre-registration students should be able to demonstrate ‘competence for collaborative practice’ using both formative and summative assessments (Barr & Lowe, 2012).

Despite guidance for shaping the assessment of interprofessional competence and or capability many find the assessment of interprofessional learning (IPL) challenging (Driessen *et al.*, 2007); McNair, 2005; Dunworth, 2007). This is mainly because it sits under the umbrella of diffuse understandings of professionalism which include factors such as ethical or value-based principles for practice, accountability, human professional behaviours such as empathy, compassion and altruism, how to

communicate, boundaries to frame practice with service users and team working (Holtman *et al.*, 2011). This is further complicated in the case of social work by continuing uncertainty about what does constitute its core professional identity (Baldwin, 2004). It may seem that such an uncertain base provides an unpromising starting point for engaging in collaborative learning and then practice across professional boundaries.

Many of the attributes of the effective practitioner are difficult to measure and assess in summative terms (Goldie, 2013) and more research is required on observable behaviours by students in team situations. The range of types of assessment used in IPE are often not reported although single modular assessment involve case studies, examination questions, reflective essays and team OSCE's for students working in acute care settings (O' Halloran, Hean, Humphries, MacLeod-Clarke, 2006).

Transformative learning depends on reflection, so that professional experience can be analysed and new understandings emerge (Mezirow, 2003). The focus on students' professional development experiences and the role of their stories in making sense of educational realities can become crucial for broadening or re-conceptualising the languages of professional identity (Wiles, 2013). Social work training, as with healthcare training, shapes the values and pattern of practice for social work professionals. As different professions have different cultures, discourses and modes of practice, students quickly adopt these and begin to see care practices through their own professional lens (Reeves, 2011; Clarke, 1997). Conflicts within teams have at times been found to be linked to each profession's distinctive views and perceptions (Liedtka & Whitten, 1998).

It is important to explore how far such identities may be affected by IPE learning events as values, self-perceptions, assumptions and preconceived ideas can be shifted in transformation and collective learning (Khalili, Orchard, Spence Laschinger & Farah, 2013). Indeed IPE has been designed to help students gain deeper insights into each other's values-bases and challenge professional socialisation and much

depends upon the ability to help students reflect from within the stances of their own and other professions (Wackerhausen, 2009)

The use of portfolios in learning and assessment

Portfolios offer the opportunity to collect a range of work and are widely used as assessment tools within health and social care professional education to facilitate on-going professional development and lifelong-learning (Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009; Buckley et al, 2009). There is widespread agreement that portfolios can legitimately be used as an assessment tool to evaluate students' progress; and to some extent, the effectiveness of their learning experiences (Harris, Dolan, Gavin, 2001; Boursicot & Roberts, 2006; Davis & Ponnampuruma, 2005). Portfolios can include evidence of achievement of learning outcomes and may be used to assess and monitor students' progress over time. As an assessment tool they can incorporate a number of methods of assessment such as essays, case reports and results of examinations, for example, objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE) (Davis et al., 2001).

It has also been suggested that portfolios help to move beyond a preoccupation simply with demonstrable competencies and develop students' critical and reflective writing and promote self-directed awareness of skills and behaviours used in practice (Schatz, 2004; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2012; Ajandi et al, 2013). Portfolios are used for qualified social workers as a basis for recording their learning as part of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (Bogg and Challis, 2013); as well as offering support for the formulation of Personal Development Plans (Care Council for Wales, 2008). Portfolios have become more commonly recognised as a valuable learning tool with the advent of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) (Skills for Care, 2012).

Putting interprofessional learning into practice

In the South Midlands, UK, three universities designed an IPE curriculum with a modified competency framework, which acknowledges the importance of demonstrating reflection and self-awareness, in order to assess equally the

knowledge, skills and values of pre-registration health and social work students across ten professions. They established aims for learning across three progressive markers to reflect the interprofessional health and social care training which runs over three years but enabling flexibility for those professions who run shorter or longer programmes. The IPE curriculum framework (The Three Strand Model) starts with classroom based theoretical foundations (Anderson & Thorpe, 2010) and progresses to practice-based learning (Figure 1) (Anderson, Ewing, Moore, 2014). Interprofessional practice-based learning applies the principles of the Leicester Model of Practice-Based IPE (Lennox & Anderson, 2007; Anderson & Smith, 2010; Anderson & Thorpe, 2010, Kinnair, Anderson & Thorpe, 2012). This model is organised so that students can learn alongside health and social care teams in hospitals or in the community learning from service users' experiences of using services. The social work students in Leicester completing this learning were from two training programmes for social work Masters (University of Leicester) and a three year degree BA programme (De Montfort University).

Assessment includes a reflective portfolio to assess students' Interprofessional curriculum learning trajectory. The Portfolio was seen as preparation for keeping a record of their continuing professional development as is now commonly required. Students were given reflection frameworks to guide them in completing their reflections (Schön, 1987; Moon, 1999). The portfolio was a personal collection of prospectively written reflective accounts of all embedded curriculum IPL from early classroom to later practice learning. The reflections were self-analyses of progress towards gaining interprofessional competence. Students were instructed to complete their personal learning reflections after each IPL event (Table 2). The Portfolio was designed for students to show what they had learnt and how the learning framed their thinking and intended behaviours towards their developing interprofessional competence (knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours). In addition each professional group asked for additional assessments to be included in the Portfolio, for example, in social work the community learning with services users was also reported as a case study summative essay. In addition the MA and BA students also used this Portfolio to complete a practice section to provide evidence of their learning in practice and record their learning journey by using the Professional Capabilities

Framework for Social Workers. Students are asked to demonstrate a meaningful indication of service user and carer involvement within the placement and portfolio. The portfolios were in this instance serving the dual pedagogic purposes of consolidating prior learning and constituting a piece of summatively assessed coursework.

INSERT FIGURE 1

INSERT TABLE 1

In this paper we report on the findings in respect of the social work students concerning their maintenance and completion of Portfolios. In particular, whether through analysis of the writing and interviews with students we could show both that learning had taken place and what this learning might comprise, whilst also gaining students' views on these methods of assessment. The IPE curriculum commenced in 2005 and the student cohort selected completed their training in 2010.

INSERT TABLE 2

Methods

This study used a qualitative design to develop an understanding of students' written reflective accounts of their learning presented in their Portfolio.

The paucity of research in the area of students' experiences of their IPE portfolios, indicated that a method concerned with novelty, complexity and process, would be advantageous (Buckley et al, 2009). In this way a nuanced qualitative approach allows for a full exploration of students' reflective accounts. This study forms part of a wider evaluation strategy relating to the delivery and impact of IPE in the East Midlands. As such, our interest in this particular case was in conducting exploratory

research whereby the researcher could focus on the participants' subjective experience and understandings of using a portfolio to incorporate reflective writing pieces based on their trajectory through the IPE experience. The data collection tools therefore were designed to open up discussion and dialogue while reading and assessing the written work itself. In this way, we felt we would be able to get beyond a simple judgement as to whether the written work met the formal criteria for completion of the task, and additionally develop some insight into the deployment of active learning strategies and use of reflection in building a portfolio (Kim, 1999).

Ethical permission to use students' learning outputs was initially obtained as part of a region-wide evaluation study in 2005 (COREC: 05/q2502/104). The ethical permission was re-affirmed by each participating university's ethical committees. Students were told that participation was voluntary and the students were informed that the results would only be used for the research purposes and would have no impact on their final grades.

The social work students in Leicester completed a range of learning events across the IPE curriculum (see Table 4). The social work students from both universities had consented to have their learning materials included in the regional evaluation study. The social work Masters course annually comprised n=40 students while the three year undergraduate qualifying programme had a cohort of around 35.

To ensure representativeness it was decided to select a random sample of 25% of students to share their Portfolios; and a further sub-set of these consented to be available for interview (Krajcie & Morgan, 1970). The interview sample was generated to the point that 'saturation' was achieved (Guest, Bruce, Johnson, 2006).

The written student accounts in the Portfolios were anonymised and photocopied. Each was read for understanding and subsequently analysed independently using content analysis techniques by two researchers (SD & ES) (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). A content framework was designed and agreed to enable the data to be coded

systematically. The data was further reduced using unitisation to assess the number of reoccurrences of themes within the written material. This material was analysed for themes relating to developing competencies, under the headings of: interprofessional knowledge; skills, attitudes and behaviours.

Semi-structured interviews (see Table 3) were then conducted with fourteen participants (7, BA and 7, MA social work students) to ensure that we explored the views of a range of participants, particularly where initial findings suggested the need for further probing (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The audio-taped interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (Riessman, 1993). The researchers focussed on meaning and content of the narrative. Emerging themes were drawn together to form meaningful conceptual categories as identified by the three researchers (SD, RS, LA).

INSERT TABLE 3

i) Learning from the Portfolio

The sample of student portfolios totalled 30 (SW BA, n=15; SW MA, n=15), representing a wide age range (18-40 years) with more female students as expected and the range of ethnic groups reflecting the diverse population of the area (Table 4).

INSERT TABLE 4

Although students' prior teaching differed, it was clear that they did bring their academic learning into play when completing their portfolios. In this sense, the portfolio exercise demonstrated the capacity to recall and integrate prior learning with the practice-based IPE learning experience; although the depth and impact of this learning could not be inferred from this evidence.

"I was conscious to deploy good listening skills and draw upon my knowledge from previous modules" (extract from MA student portfolio).

There seemed to be differences between the courses (Tables 5 and 6) in the substantive content of their reflections relating to skills developed and behaviours reinforced. BA students' reflective accounts (somewhat surprisingly) were more likely to incorporate theory than MA students, and they reflected more often upon the importance of team development for effective collaboration; and they wrote less on leadership and interdependency (Table 5).

INSERT TABLE 5

In strand two of the IPE programme, students were based at a GP surgery, in order to explore the experiences of service users/patients in the community. Students were able to write about service users' needs and experience of health and social care, and how the caring role has an impact on informal carers. Students reflected on the impact of IPE planning with service users focusing on mental health problems and the professionals working with them (Table 6). Students also reflected on the roles of different health care professionals.

"It was necessary for me to recognise that GPs receive very different training to that of social workers, therefore often leading to different perceptions..."

(extract from BA student portfolio)

MA students wrote about how to prepare themselves before assessing service users' needs and how to approach the task of engaging effectively with service users, including: communication planning, types of questions, concluding remarks and dealing with unpredictable difficulties (Table 7).

"In future I would plan better for interprofessional meetings and ensure that I understood the roles and processes.... (extract from MA student portfolio)

Compared to BA students, perhaps reflecting prior teaching input, MA social work students focused rather more on the principles of good team work and how this can

increase the effectiveness and innovation in delivering better outcomes for service users.

“[The IPE experience] demonstrates that the more open people are to other people’s perspectives, the greater the willingness to share ideas and experience...” (extract from MA student portfolio).

Students also reflected that they had learnt a great deal about the roles and responsibilities of other practitioners through the exchange of knowledge and ideas. All students’ final reflections showed substantive understanding about professional differences or identities, as well as the value of coordination, active listening and developing positive team working attitudes.

INSERT TABLE 6

INSERT TABLE 7

ii) Student views on the use of the Portfolio

In order to obtain deeper understanding of their approach to and use of portfolios, the study carried out interviews with fourteen students. Several themes emerged. Firstly, students were able to write about the gains they perceived they had made. The IPE events had often expected students to make group presentations based on their learning:

“I think that our group reflection and presentation at the end did show our understanding of the issues and concerns raised and it taught me a lot about how different agencies worked and the different opinions that people can form of a particular agency, especially Social Services.” *(MA Student)*

“I realised that as professionals we would have to throw ourselves into new situations, getting to know people and build a rapport quickly. I felt I did this and showed respect in my explanations and questioning.” *(MA Student)*

The students stated that sharing their experiences highlighted the importance of good communication “(*I enhanced my communication skills*)” and respect for others within and beyond their own professional fields. They also referred to using good communication in order to have positive relationships and achieve constructive outcomes for service users and their carers.

“It will be useful to recall how my practice teacher used good communication skills to make her voice heard at case conferences. She was not afraid to approach other professionals, which gained her their respect. I think I will be more prepared to do this [with the knowledge] I have gained about other professionals’ roles from IPE. The fact that we have learnt side-by-side makes us feel more like equals rather than there being a hierarchy of one profession as more important than another...” (*MA Student*)

Some students stated that they did not receive much guidance about what was expected and a number of students did find it difficult to write about themselves. Students sometimes omitted to complete their reflections after the IPE events.

“There are still gaps when we spent so much time focusing on what to write in the portfolio when we reflect. We should have been encouraged to write things down as soon the activities are completed and reflect on our learning.” (*MA Student*)

Some found it challenging to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and in some ways writing about these aspects felt artificial. They suggested it is easier to self-criticise and reflect on what ‘*one did*’ and what ‘*one needs to improve on*’.

“I don’t find it easy to write about the skills that I attained and... how I changed as a person from a single experience. I found this difficult to articulate.” (*BA Student*).

“It is harder to think about the things that you do well.... Communication with different professionals was easier for me to write down” (*BA student*).

Despite these concerns, students did perceive learning Portfolios as a helpful way to reflect on their learning, following the IPE events. Students also felt portfolios were constructive in documenting their learning and enabling them to recognise their progression.

“The portfolio was helpful guidance for us to write down our self-reflective thoughts after we attended the learning events” (MA student).

“I found it fine and it makes you realise how important it is to reflect and without this course it wouldn’t be possible to do this” (BA student).

Respondents additionally commented that completing the portfolio enabled them to gain insight into underlying processes that were integral to their experiences.

“The learning triggers on the portfolio enhanced my communication with other students and professionals and help me learn to identify and tackle problems”.
(BA Student)

In some cases, the students indicated that working on the portfolio helped to consolidate learning, even where it was not the trigger for that learning to take place.

“It is not completing my portfolio that has made me aware of my learning process. I think it is the practical things that made realise and made me more critical of myself. Every minute of the day, there is so much to learn and there is not enough time to write things down immediately as you have already learnt about it. Writing on portfolio was kind of giving feedback to yourself.”
(BA Student)

Discussion and Conclusions

The study found that in general students were able to utilise their portfolio work to reflect on learning relating to new knowledge, practice skills and attitudes. These

social work students used their uni-professional context to underpin their learning, although there was evidence of cross-boundary reflection and integration of knowledge, attributable to their experience of IPE. The writing helped to consolidate the theory based values which underpin social work training (Fisher & Somerton, 2000), at least in the sense that these were reproduced in students' insightful writing.

The findings are helpful for IPE curriculum developers revealing how students were deconstructing their understandings and reconstructing them in the light of their collaborative learning resulting in a new collaborative professional knowledge (Baldwin, 2004). The ability to think not just from one professional domain but to reflect after dialogical debates and discussions with students from other professions offers a real ability to think about what it means to work collaboratively (Hakkarainen & Paavola (2007). This comes clearly in the final reflections which show the value of learning in this way over time. Students articulated their understandings about professional identities and the need for fully coordinated care services.

The study limitations relate to the ability to conduct detailed content analysis on large numbers of Portfolios so that only 30 were read. The random sample tried to ensure that these were representative of the cohort. The interviews were conducted paying attention to the role of the researcher in qualitative methodology, such as emotional distancing, but recall bias cannot be discounted. The portfolio appears to be an effective tool for professional self-analysis and an instrument for the construction of the self as a future professional, and as a potential collaborator with colleagues from other disciplines. However, although our writing begins to demonstrate this we must acknowledge the potential need for further research in this area to disentangle when and how learning takes place, and if writing about learning is an additive and necessary ingredient.

It remains vital that IPE is assessed (Anderson et al, 2015), as without assessment this learning is not valued and moving towards a summative assessment remains critical (Barr, Helme & D'Avray, 2011). Ideally this 'should be based on demonstrated competence for collaborative practice' (Barr & Lowe 2012). As with all

curriculum content we need a combination of different types of assessment. The use of the portfolio goes some way to offering an acceptable model and one which seeks to prepare students for on-going reflective practice. Indeed qualified social workers are increasingly likely to find that portfolio-based learning (and the evidencing thereof) is commonplace in practice as new models of professional development, such as that represented by the Professional Capabilities Framework, become established as the norm.

Our findings echo previous findings that a portfolio is a useful tool for gathering evidence about students' performance and supporting their professional and personal development (Winograd & Jones, 1992; Courts & McNerny, 1993; Schatz, 2004; Buckley et al, 2009; Coolin, 2013). The use of portfolios offers an iterative means of reviewing, enhancing and embedding learning, enabling students to demonstrate their professional development through reflective and experiential learning. Using a purposeful portfolio improves students' engagement in learning. Portfolios develop students' professional boundary-crossing skills such as integrative thinking which involves incorporating knowledge and analysis from two or more health and social care professionals in order to produce improvements in service user outcomes.

Portfolios should be clearly defined and designed and well communicated to the students so that they understand how their learning is progressed using this particular tool. Self-reporting evidence on IPE Portfolios is useful but needs to be combined with other evidence to capture the application of theory in practice; this would include, for example, competency requirements for social work students in team working. A portfolio needs to be reviewed and evaluated on an on-going basis and needs to be linked to feedback from the students and tutors/facilitators/onsite supervisors. It is important that students are supported during the portfolio development process. It is also essential that training is available to prepare the assessors and tutors in marking portfolios.

The IPE portfolio assessment must be achievable for staff and yet hold the validity, reliability and credibility to gain student and staff confidence in the process. A

method of portfolio assessment should measure what it intends to measure (validity). The basic requirement for a method of assessment is that it consistently measures what it is supposed to measure (reliability). Credibility is based on the concepts of 'capable of being believed' and trustworthiness, according to which students reflect and record accurately and honestly. Other authors have highlighted that portfolios can have potential disadvantages such as lack of openness in reflection, writing purely for the assessment and 'jumping through hoops' (Buckley et al., 2009). Final year students sharing their experience of completed portfolios with junior students may help to address these issues.

Recently educational policy agendas and reform documents have highlighted that there is a need for students to develop skills and attitudes for self-regulated and self-reflective learning (QAA, 2006, 2012, 2013). There are many political and social reasons for professionals to be self-directive in their collaborative work. Pressures from government and employers for qualifying social workers to be better prepared for the world of work have resulted in strengthened emphasis on competent future professionals through clear accountability, responsibility, ownership and quality assurance (see Narey, 2014, for example). Moving beyond a relatively one-dimensional conceptualisation of competency and formal records of learning, student portfolios constitute one assessment tool that can be used to measure performance and insights, based on a learning paradigm which encourages critical and reflective writing, assesses students' appreciation of the values consistent with their role and strengthens self-directed learning.

Declaration of interest

The authors report no conflict of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of the article.

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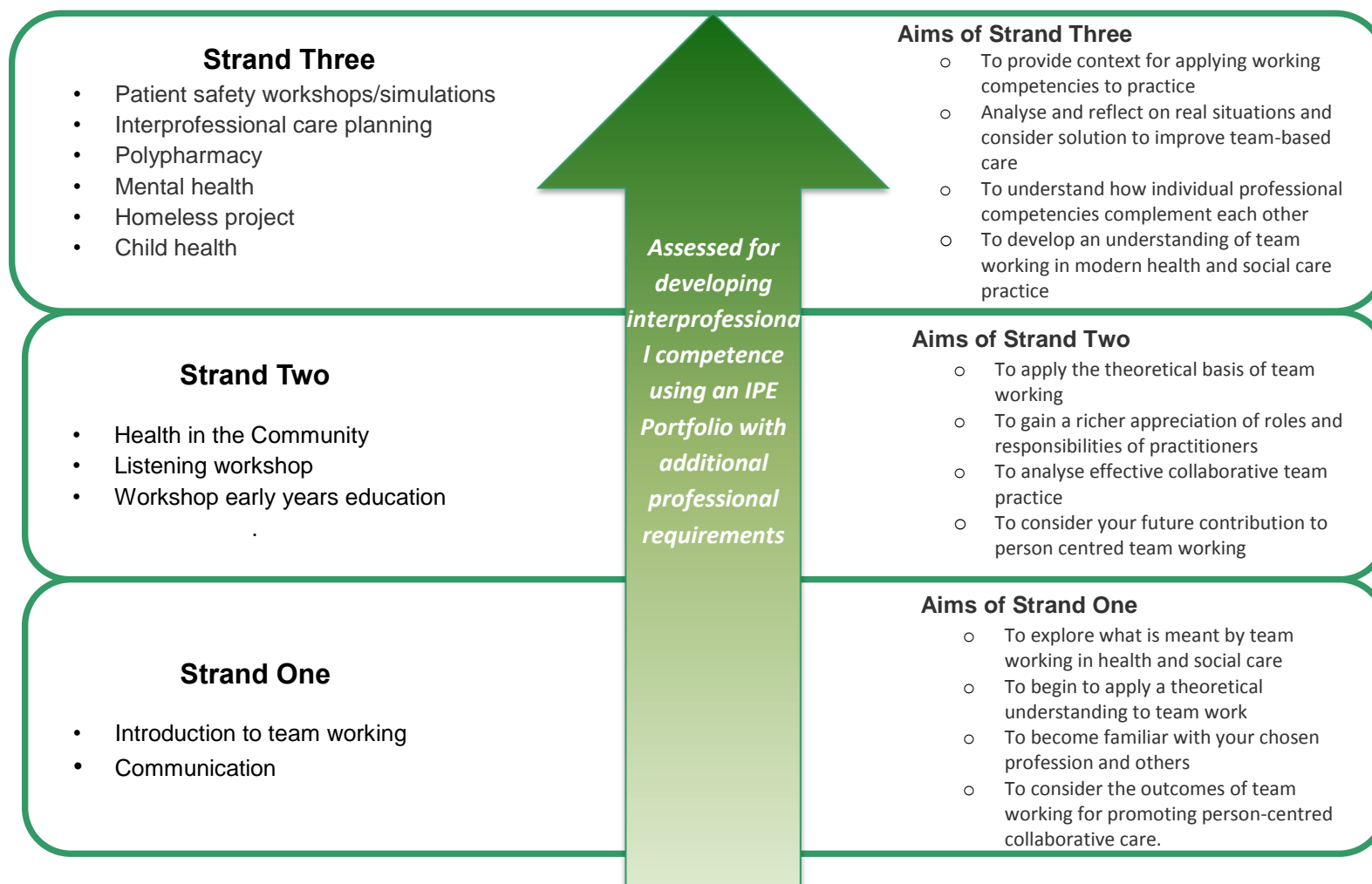
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Figure 1 The Strand Model of Interprofessional Education in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Workforce Development Confederation (Anderson & Knight, 2004)



**Table 1 Expected Professional Outcomes to be Achieved by Students
(Health Care Professional Council - HCPC, 2012)**

| Standards of Proficiency / Professional Outcomes |
|--|
| <p><i>Social work students are assessed on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - professionalism - values and ethics - diversity - rights, justice and economic well-being - knowledge - critical reflection and analysis - intervention and skills - concepts and organisations - professional leadership (HCPC, Sep 2012). |

Table 2 Learning Events Attended by BA with MA Social Work Students

| Student | Strand One - Beginning Learning Events | Strand Two - Middle Learning Events | Strand Three - Towards End Learning Events |
|---|---|---|--|
| Social Work Students (BA, De Montfort University) | <p>All undergraduate students: One day theoretical event in the first 6 months of training.</p> <p>Analysis of team functioning, stereotypes, roles and responsibilities of health and social care professionals. A case study analysis. Understanding about what makes for effective teams and drawing on theory of team working.</p> <p>Social care students at DMU (S&LT and social work) also do one day additional strand.</p> | Two day practice-base course entitled health in the community . Students work in small teams and analyse the health and social care needs of a complex case. They also examine collaborative working to tackle poverty and disadvantage. | <p>Students may attend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient safety one day workshops, which are adapted in content for the different health and social care involved but the learning outcomes are the same. • Interprofessional care planning: a 4 day event on discharge planning in which students work on the wards. • Listening workshops: A one way workshop with service users to analyse interprofessional communication. • Mental health interprofessional care planning. A 2-3 day event in which students work with service users. |
| Social Work (MA, University of Leicester) | Graduates complete a similar strand one event which recognises their experience in health care and is aligned to theory in the same way. | | |

Table 3 Interview Schedule

1. Can we start by asking you about completing your IPE programme?
2. Did you find completing written reflections after the IPE events helped your learning?
3. How did you find writing about knowledge gained

Prompt: What is the most interesting/important knowledge learnt while you were completing the Portfolio?

4. How did you find writing about your skills on the Portfolio?

Prompt: What is the most interesting/important skill you learnt while you were completing the Portfolio?

5. How did you find writing about your attitudes on the Portfolio?

Prompt: What is the most important attitude you considered while you were completing the Portfolio?

6. Do you know how your Portfolio was assessed?
7. Did you receive feedback after the completion of your portfolio?

Prompt: writing or verbal?

8. The Portfolio assessment had a number of self-evaluation sections. Was it difficult to complete these sections?

Prompt: Can you explain why the easy items were easy for you to complete?

9. What is your definition of learning?
10. Do you think a Portfolio is a good way of assessing this learning?
11. Do you think that Portfolio covers the overall picture?
12. Do you want to raise any other points about the completion of Portfolio?

Probe: Can you think of ways to improve the IPE Portfolio?

Table 4: Characteristics of All Students

| Characteristics | Social Work Students (BA) | Social Work Students (MA) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Age (range 22-40 years) | Total=15 | Total=15 |
| 22-25 | | |
| 25-30 | 3 | 4 |
| 30-35 | 6 | 7 |
| 35-40 | 3 | 2 |
| 40+ | 2 | 2 |
| | 1 | - |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 4 | 2 |
| Female | 11 | 13 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| White British | 6 | 8 |
| African Caribbean | 4 | 3 |
| Indian/Asian | 4 | 2 |
| Chinese | - | 1 |
| Other | 1 | 1 |
| Portfolio pass rate | | |
| Excellent | 2 | 2 |
| Merit | 6 | 4 |
| Satisfactory | 7 | 2 |
| Borderline Satisfactory | - | 7 |

Table 5: Strand One, Two and Three about Skills

| Themes Identified in all the Portfolios | Social Work Students (BA) % content in all Portfolios | Social Work Students (MA) % content in all Portfolios |
|--|--|--|
| Beginning (Strand One) | | |
| Theory | 46.5% | |
| Communication | 26.5% | |
| Leadership | 6.5% | |
| Learning from each other | | 20% |
| Creative approach to basic problem solving as a team | | 6.5% |
| Middle (Strand Two) | | |
| Effective communication (open questioning, active listening) | 15% | 20% |
| Group negotiation to deal with challenging situations | 13% | 7% |
| Towards End (Strand Three) | | |
| Advanced communication | 14% | 34% |
| Self-analysis and reflections | | 14% |
| Gathering detailed information | | 34% |
| Challenging assumptions in constructive way | 7% | 20% |
| Forward planning with team members | | 40% |
| Analyse the problems as a team and find solutions | | 14% |

Table 6: Strand One, Two and Three about Professional Behaviour and Attitude

| Themes Identified in all the Portfolios | Social Work Students (BA) % content in all Portfolios | Social Work Students (MA) % content in all Portfolios |
|--|--|--|
| Beginning (Strand One) | | |
| Positive attitudes towards team working | 6.5% | - |
| Respect to each other | 46.5% | 13.5% |
| Challenge the barriers | 13.5% | 13.5% |
| Challenge unhelpful stereotype about others | 20% | - |
| Non-judgemental approach towards patient/service users | 13.5% | - |
| Empathy to deal with sensitive and distressing subjects | - | 20% |
| Middle (Strand Two) | | |
| Showing appreciation of other professionals | - | 20% |
| Social and health inequalities | - | 6.5% |
| Towards End (Strand Three) | | |
| Positive attitude towards the interprofessional patient care | 40% | - |
| Recognising discrimination and health inequalities | - | 33.3% |
| Recognising carers needs/stress | 20% | 13.50 |
| Mutual respect | 13.5% | |
| Feeling confident about the professional role | 13.5% | 20% |
| Showing appreciation of other professionals | 13.5% | 26.5% |
| Increased non-judgemental practice | - | 13.5% |

Table 7: Final Reflections (end of the course)

| Themes Identified in all the Portfolios | Social Work Students (BA) % content in all Portfolios | Social Work Students (MA) % content in all Portfolios |
|--|--|--|
| Advanced awareness of the roles of other professionals | - | 20% |
| Professional Identity | 13.50% | 20% |
| In-depth coordination between professionals leads to better outcomes | 20% | 20% |
| Patient centred care planning and involvement of others | - | 20% |
| Life Long learning | 13.50% | - |
| Improved quality of life for patients | 13.50% | - |
| Understanding differences of opinions | 13.50% | |
| Excellent, appropriate and various ways of communication | - | 20% |
| Active listening skills | 20% | 26.50% |
| Learning from each other | 20% | - |
| Empathy to deal with sensitive and distressing subjects | - | 20% |
| Appreciation of other professionals | - | 26.50% |
| Demonstrating positive attitudes towards team working | 20% | 13.50% |
| Dealing with own beliefs/prejudices/conflicts towards others | 20% | 13.50% |
| Feeling confident about the professional identity | - | 13.50% |
| Being sensitive to patients' circumstances | 13.50% | - |
| Having approachable manner | - | 13.50% |
| Non-judgemental approach toward patient/service user | 26.50% | - |